IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claims 1, 6, 13, and 22 as indicated below.

Please add claims 27 and 28 as indicated below.

A listing of the status of all claims 1-28 in the present patent application is provided below.

1 (Currently Amended). A vertebral stabilization assembly for stabilizing vertebrae, the assembly comprising:

a vertebral screw having a shaft provided with a threaded portion configured to threadingly engage a vertebral body of a vertebra, the shaft having an engaging portion extending partially therethrough; and

a connecting screw having a first end and a second end, the first end configured to be substantially transversely received by and threadingly engaged with the engaging portion of the vertebral screw within the vertebral body of the vertebra.

2 (Previously Presented). The vertebral stabilization assembly of Claim 1, wherein the vertebral screw is configured to be positioned in the vertebra from an anterior side of the vertebra into the vertebral body of the vertebra.

3 (Previously Presented). The vertebral stabilization assembly of Claim 2, wherein the vertebral screw is configured to be

positioned through the vertebral body of the vertebra and into a pedicle portion of the vertebra.

4 (Previously Presented). The vertebral stabilization assembly of Claim 2, wherein the vertebral screw is configured to be positioned through the vertebral body of the vertebra but not into a pedicle portion of the vertebra.

5 (Previously Presented). The vertebral stabilization assembly of Claim 1, wherein the vertebral screw is configured to enter the vertebra through an anterior side of the vertebra.

6 (Currently Amended). The vertebral stabilization assembly of Claim 1, wherein the vertebral screw is configured to enter the vertebra through ~~an anterior side~~ a pedicle of the vertebra.

7 (Previously Presented). The vertebral stabilization assembly of Claim 1, further comprising a connecting member coupled to the connecting screw outside the vertebral body of the vertebra.

8 (Previously Presented). The vertebral stabilization assembly of Claim 7, wherein the connecting member is coupled to the connecting screw at the second end of the connecting screw.

9 (Previously Presented). The vertebral stabilization assembly of Claim 1, wherein the connecting screw is configured to be positioned in the vertebra from an anterior side of the vertebra into the vertebral body of the vertebra.

10 (Previously Presented). A method for stabilizing vertebrae using a vertebral stabilization assembly, the method comprising:

inserting a vertebral screw, which includes a shaft provided with a threaded portion configured to threadingly engage a vertebra, into the vertebra from an anterior side of the vertebra such that a portion of the threaded portion of the shaft engages a vertebral body portion of the vertebra, the shaft of the vertebral screw having an engaging portion configured to receive a connecting screw, and the shaft of the vertebral screw having a coupling portion configured to couple with a guide member;

locating the coupling portion of the shaft of the vertebral screw from an anterior side of the vertebra;

coupling the guide member to the coupling portion of the shaft of the vertebral screw from the anterior side of the vertebra; and

inserting a connecting screw, which includes a first end configured to be received by the engaging portion of the vertebral screw and a second end, through the anterior side of

the vertebra using the guide member.

11 (Previously Presented). The method of Claim 10, wherein the vertebral screw is configured to be positioned through the vertebral body of the vertebra and into a pedicle portion of the vertebra.

12 (Previously Presented). The method of Claim 11, wherein the vertebral screw is configured to be positioned through the vertebral body of the vertebra but not into a pedicle portion of the vertebra.

13 (Currently Amended). A vertebral stabilization assembly for stabilizing vertebrae comprising:

a pedicle screw having a shaft provided with a threaded portion configured to threadingly engage a vertebra, the shaft having an engaging portion extending partially therethrough; and

a connecting screw having a first end configured to be substantially transversely received by and threadingly engaged with the engaging portion of the pedicle screw within the vertebra.

14 (Previously Presented). The vertebral stabilization assembly of Claim 13, wherein the pedicle screw is configured to be

positioned in the vertebra from an anterior side of the vertebra into a vertebral body of the vertebra.

15 (Previously Presented). The vertebral stabilization assembly of Claim 14, wherein the pedicle screw is configured to be positioned through the vertebral body of the vertebra and into a pedicle portion of the vertebra.

16 (Previously Presented). The vertebral stabilization assembly of Claim 13, wherein the pedicle screw is configured to enter the vertebra through an anterior side of the vertebra.

17 (Previously Presented). The vertebral stabilization assembly of Claim 13, wherein the pedicle screw is configured to enter the vertebra through a pedicle of the vertebra.

18 (Previously Presented). The vertebral stabilization assembly of Claim 13, further comprising a connecting member coupled to the connecting screw outside a vertebral body of the vertebra.

19 (Previously Presented). The vertebral stabilization assembly of Claim 18, wherein the connecting member is coupled to the connecting screw at a second end of the connecting screw.

20 (Previously Presented). The vertebral stabilization assembly of Claim 13, wherein the connecting screw is configured to be positioned in the vertebra from an anterior side of the vertebra into a vertebral body of the vertebra.

21 (Previously Presented). A vertebral stabilization assembly for stabilizing vertebrae and an item to assist with installation of the assembly, the combination comprising:

a pedicle screw having a shaft provided with a threaded portion configured to threadingly engage a vertebra, the shaft having an engaging portion;

a connecting screw having a first end configured to be substantially transversely received by the engaging portion of the pedicle screw within the vertebra; and

a bore screw having a shaft and a threaded portion, the bore screw configured to bore an opening in the vertebra for placement of the pedicle screw.

22 (Currently Amended). A vertebral stabilization assembly for stabilizing vertebrae and an item to assist with installation of the assembly, the combination comprising:

a pedicle screw having a shaft provided with a threaded portion configured to threadingly engage a vertebra, the shaft having an engaging portion <u>extending partially therethrough</u>;

a connecting screw having a first end configured to be substantially transversely received by and threadingly engaged with the engaging portion of the pedicle screw within the vertebra; and

a tool configured to engage at least the connecting screw for connection of at least the connecting screw to the pedicle screw.

23 (Previously Presented). The combination of Claim 22, further including a tool configured to engage at least the connecting screw for removal of at least the connecting screw from the pedicle screw.

24 (Previously Presented). The combination of Claim 22, further including a tool configured to engage at least the pedicle screw for threading engagement of at least the pedicle screw in the vertebra.

25 (Previously Presented). The combination of Claim 22, further including a tool configured to engage at least the pedicle screw for stabilization of at least the pedicle screw while removing the connecting screw.

26 (Previously Presented). The combination of Claim 22, wherein

the pedicle screw has a coupling portion configured to couple with a guide member, and further including a guide member configured to couple with the coupling portion of the pedicle screw.

27 (New). The vertebral stabilization assembly of Claim 1, wherein the engaging portion includes at least one of a tensioning mechanism, a locking mechanism, a keyed mating arrangement.

28 (New). The vertebral stabilization assembly of Claim 13, wherein the engaging portion includes at least one of a tensioning mechanism, a locking mechanism, a keyed mating arrangement.